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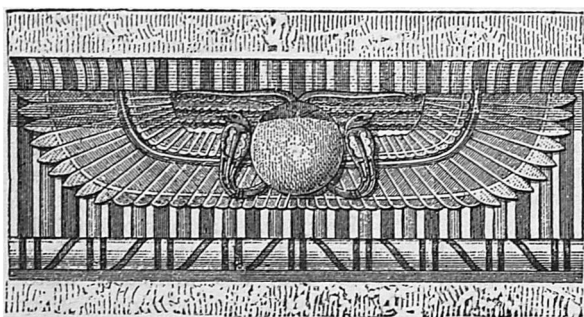
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OUR COLORED PLATE.

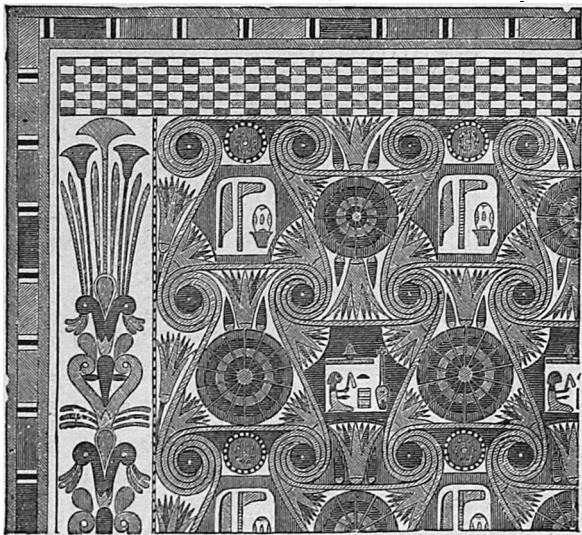
STUDY IN EGYPTIAN AND ASSYRIAN STYLES AND COLORS.

ON the opposite page we give the first of a series of colored plates reproducing the styles of ornamentation and character of the coloring employed by early nations. The particular work to which the artist has applied his designs in this plate, is a ceiling and side wall for the Egyptian style, and a ceiling with a frieze and a strip of the wall space, for the Assyrian.

To the casual observer Egyptian ornamentation conveys no other impression than that of a geometrical conventionalising of natural forms, but to the more earnest investigator, who seeks beneath the surface of the picture, the decoration assumes a symbolic character, and the details have a meaning that must have been prompted by some carefully considered and well-defined law. The observance of this law produced a style peculiar to itself and distinct from all others. For while we may trace the origin of Greek designs to Egypt, find in Greece a source of Roman forms, and in Rome the patterns for Gothic shapes, Egypt is its own art ancestor, and imitates no other known style in its work.

There is a want of perspective in the art, a forbidding angularity in the figures, and a crude taste in the application of color, but these figures are characteristic, and have been faithfully preserved throughout the history of Egyptian painting. The colors employed were limited to six; black, white, red, blue, yellow and green, there were no half-tints used, and the shades were of the most positive nature. The combinations were made with such judgment, however, and the character of the decoration so well adapted to the colors, that the shock and violence of the effect of such strong treatment was not so severe as would be supposed. Gaudy diaper patterns were disposed in a manner to relieve them very materially of the appearance of severity. That gold was very liberally used, we may judge from the elaborate work upon mummies and mummy cases, which have been discovered. Most of the bodies have the feet and the linen mask over the face of gilt; others and royal personages are gilded from head to feet, and upon the wooden cases the most elaborate gold work is seen.

Perrot and Chipiez in their interesting *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, say, "The Egyptian decorator shows in his wall painting, whether it



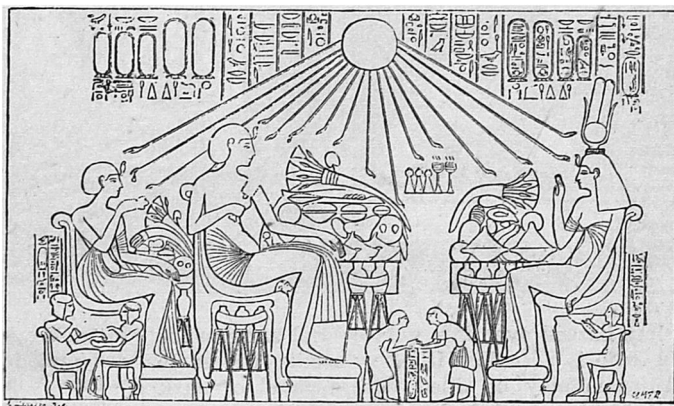
WALL DECORATION FROM THEBES.

be upon limestone or sandstone, the true veins of the different woods or the peculiarities of the various granites, and with rare skill, tracing with few colors, he gives to a common pebble the appearance of inestimable value."

The most conspicuous figure in the Egyptian ceiling upon our colored plate is the representation of the sun in No. 1, the rays of which terminate in human hands.

With the Egyptians the sun was symbolic of universal power, and every ray of its light ending in a hand denotes its active control over the affairs of this world. The worship of the sun was introduced by Amenophis IV., and our illustration of this adoration discovered amid the ruins of a temple near the village of Tell-el-Amarna, shows that prince practicing his cult of the heavenly sphere. This body, which was the object of such veneration, was not always worshipped in the shape of a painting, for it has been learned from inscriptions in the Temple of Serapis, that a small image of the sun, seated in a chariot harnessed to four horses, was let down from the ceiling at sunrise, and drawn up again at sunset by means of a powerful magnet.

Another means of materializing this celestial deity was in the form of a globe, red in color, with wings of green. Upon either side of the disc the serpents Uraeus raise their heads, royal symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt. The wings rest upon a succession of alternate red, white and blue stripes. It denotes the all powerful protection of Egypt, and by the instructions of the priests, the people placed this device on the lintel over the door of every Egyptian building. Moses, to demonstrate the futility of this



WORSHIP OF THE SUN, FROM TELL-EL-AMARNA.

protection, directed that the blood of the lamb slain at the Passover be placed upon the lintel, in the very position of this winged globe.

The authority for the cerulean sky forming a background to the sun's rays, is from Diodorus, who describes the ceiling of the Temple of El Karnac as being painted blue, studded with constellations of stars, and Perrot and Chipiez, already quoted, observe that, "the Egyptian has created, between the ceiling of the high hypostyle halls and the heavens that cover our heads, an assimilation that approaches the same effect. The ceilings of the Theban temples were colored blue more often than those of any other temples, and generally bore golden stars."

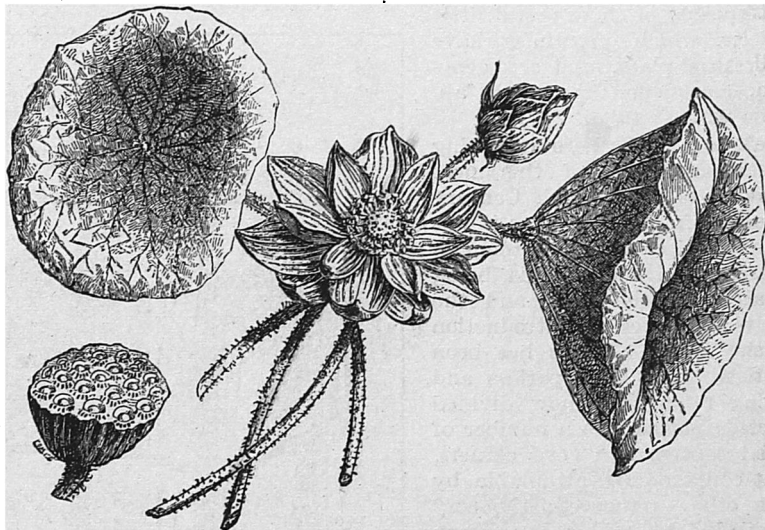
The scroll ornament that enters into the border was a popular one for the body work of ceilings and walls, as is shown in the accompanying illustration from Thebes.

"The scroll typified the waves of the rising Nile, from which Egypt derived so many benefits. It subsequently became a favorite ornament in Greece, where it, no doubt, suggested the idea of the scroll proper, in which the wave is alternated on each side of a serpentine line."

Of all floral subjects the lotus was generally accepted as the most desirable, not merely in a decorative but a symbolic sense. It was the first spring flower, it sprang from the alluvial deposit of the Nile, and was a harbinger of the season for a plethoric harvest. The priests taught that it was the abode of a god, and its naturally graceful shape appealed to the artistic taste as well as to the superstitions, of the people. The flower as nature left it may be seen in our illustration.

It was the emblem of a generative power, and of the creation of the world from water; it was carried in the hands of deities, and waved above the heads of kings; gods found thrones upon the plant; it formed their crowns; it constituted their sceptre. It was treated in many ways, and ably adapted to the requirements of every position. Dumichen tells of his discovery of the tomb of Ti, and referring to one of the larger chambers within it, says:

"Interpreted by the hand of the ornamentist, the lotus and the papyrus have heretofore taken, in decoration, a conventional form; here on the contrary, the artist has reproduced these types of the vegetable kingdom with a sentiment of truth that is akin to our modern mode of painting flowers." Jacquemart assures us that, viewed from a religious standpoint, the lotus represents the homage



THE NATURAL LOTUS.

rendered to the beneficent action of water and sun on the sleeping earth; it is the symbolism of the annual evolution of the seasons, causing generation to succeed generation, and bringing back life where everything seemed like the immobility of death.

The conventionalized lotus for ceiling or wall adornment usually took the form shown in the illustration below.

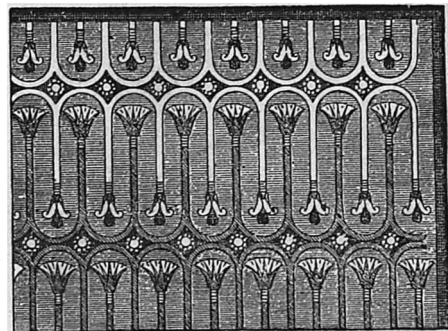
The columns and obelisks were decorated with a band or frieze of the lotus, and the columns themselves were frequently exaggerated stone reproductions of stalks of the flower, bound together to give them the appearance of strength.

The snake was an emblem of wisdom and immortality, it often bore the head of a deity, it was frequently provided with limbs of human beings, it was winged and it was crowned; it bore itself erect, and the hood upon its head was received as Nature's mark of nobility, Nature's semblance to a crown. Its swiftness of motion, its noiseless action, and its quickness of perception indicated wisdom, while its readily adjusted shape, permitting it to be joined head and tail into a circle, indicated immortality, without beginning and without end. When the Cross of Hermes, the cross adopted by the Christians, had the addition of a serpent twined about it, it indicated immortal life. The snake Mehen, represented in waves and curves, symbolized the winding course of the sun during the night, in the under world.

The snake in the upper right hand corner of Fig. 2, is the figure that usually appears in Egyptian art erect upon the head-dress of the king, or shown on the walls and ceilings as if gliding about, as Plutarch says, without limbs, like the stars.

Records of animal life were well preserved in the painting of the Egyptians, the sacred bulls, jackalls,

wolves, dogs and cats, to say nothing of the deities with the heads of beasts, formed conspicuous features in decoration. The winged



THE CONVENTIONALIZED LOTUS CEILING DECORATION.

wolves at the head of Fig. 2, are prototypes of their Denderah or Edfu ancestors.

These animals, it must be considered, were worshipped as gods or the vicars of gods. The people of Memphis built a temple, 2,000 B.C., for the worship of the bull Apis, Heliopolis set up a rival bull, Amun-Ehe, and at a later date the inhabitants of Mendes devoted themselves to the goat Mando. The sphinx, a compromise between man and beast, may be the outgrowth of this disposition to bestow upon animals the attributes of mankind. These monstrous combinations, symbols of bodily strength with mental power (according to F. E. Hulme) people the Valley of the Nile, have guarded the approaches to the Pyramids for centuries, and to-day, buried by the sands of four thousand years, they are





ANCIENT COLORING AND STYLES OF DECORATION APPLIED TO MODERN USES.

A Series of Studies by RAFAEL GUASTAVINO. Architect.



brought to the surface only by the spades of an invader.

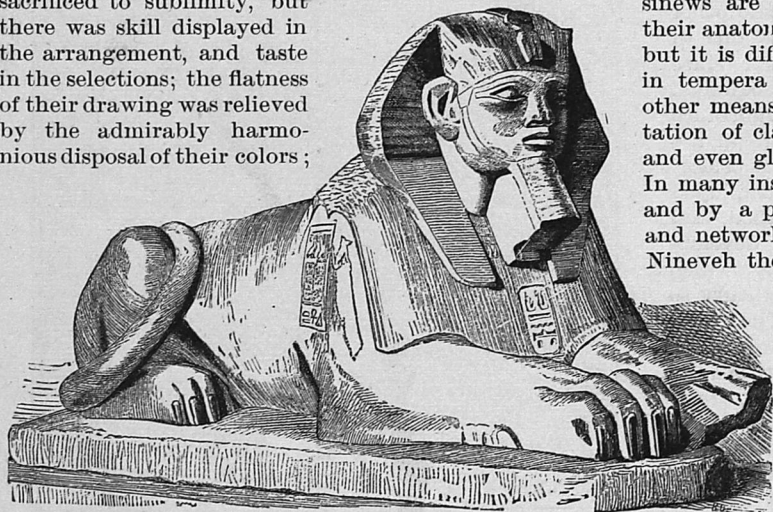
There sits drear Egypt, 'mid beleaguering sands,  
Half human and half beast;  
Th' exhausted torch within her mouldering hands,  
That once lit all the East.

In the lower panel of Fig. 2, the scarabeus, or beetle, is shown upon a blue ground. The worship of this repulsive creature is another of the incomprehensible features of Egyptian religion, an insect with all the qualities of repulsion, insignificant, not even venomous, is raised from its sand hill and ranked with the gods, its image is worn as an amulet, it is sacred to the sun, and an emblem of creation and a new life. This may explain its presence on the mummy cases from one of which our illustration is taken.

The waving lines in the centre ground of Fig. 2 are all symbols of the Nile, the zig-zag at the top is still preserved as Aquarius, the water-bearer, in the signs of the Zodiac, and we find its traces in the Norman and early English styles. In the tombs, this decoration of the centre wall bore winged figures of Isis and Nephthys, either in a sitting or standing position, and with one wing pointing toward the nether world, the other at the sun.

Upon their head was the globe, and over their forehead the deadly Uraeus, symbol of sovereign power, always found in the diadem of the Pharaohs.

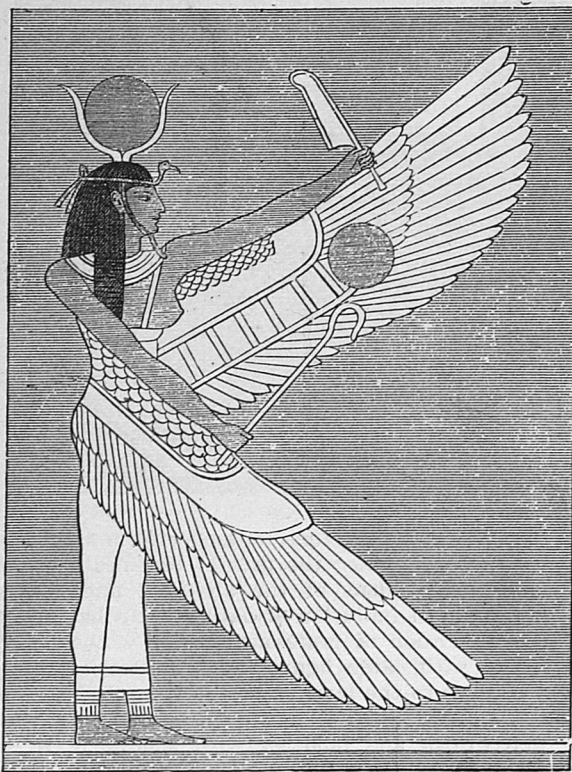
There may be many faults in the Egyptian mode of decoration, grace, it is true, has been sacrificed to sublimity, but there was skill displayed in the arrangement, and taste in the selections; the flatness of their drawing was relieved by the admirably harmonious disposal of their colors;



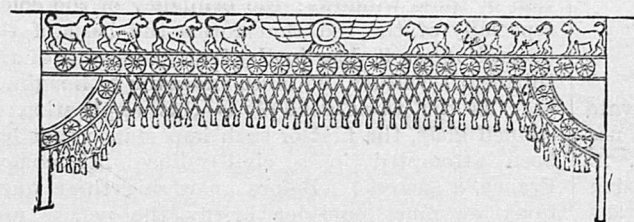
THE EGYPTIAN SPHINX.

everything was made subordinate to effect, moldings were never permitted to interfere with the continuity of the decoration; the custom prevailed of concentrating the ornament to a central point, the columns at the extremities of a chamber were plainer, and became more elaborate as they neared the centre, where the climax of elaboration was achieved; and we can readily fall into Denons enthusiastic exclamation, "One is fatigued with writing, one is fatigued with reading, one is stunned with the thought of such a conception. It is hardly possible to believe in so much magnificence even after having seen it."

Existing contemporaneously with Egyptian art, that of Assyria partook necessarily of it in some



THE WINGED ISIS.



ASSYRIAN CANOPY.

degree. The Egyptian influence is found in many of their buildings, the winged globe is often seen and the Uraeus raises its head in the one place as in the other.

The successors of Cambyses, that Assyrian king who conquered Egypt, called Egyptian artists to aid in the adornment of their chambers, and these artists were compelled to adapt the forms which they had been accustomed to associate only with the decoration of the temples in their native country, to the embellishment of private dwellings in Assyria, and by this adaptation and loss of the surroundings which had given them a symbolic character, they became merely decorative figures, void of distinct meaning.

The decorative art of the Assyrian shows us two distinct periods—an older and a more recent one. The older works had a bluish green ground; the later a light ground, either whitish or yellowish. In both styles the outlines are marked strongly in black or dark red. In the older the sinews are more rope-like and less correct in their anatomy. Polychromy was known to them, but it is difficult to decide whether they colored in tempera or in fresco, with wax or by some other means, perhaps even in oil. The incrustation of clay walls with baked and painted, and even glazed tiles, it is difficult to explain. In many instances each one has its own color, and by a proper arrangement, squares, diapers and networks were produced. At Babylon and Nineveh the tiles show clear marks of painting.

Diodorus gives us a description of the interior wall of the royal palace at Babylon, and says: "It was decorated with all sorts of colored human and animal forms, baked in clay, much resembling nature. The whole represented a hunt." The principles of decoration with the Assyrians far surpass mere ornamentation in geometrical patterns. Dramatic life of a higher kind is introduced, showing greater artistic power than the reliefs in stone. The outlines are neither black nor red, the treatment is tasteful, the colors a tender blue, brown, white or yellow, and the ground a lightish green.

The winged bull was an incident of Assyrian decoration as characteristic as the winged globe of the Egyptians. It figured upon their walls and guarded the entrance to their palaces. It might be properly classed as a composite animal, with the Sphinx of Egypt or Greece, or the Chimera of Rome; with the differences, that the Egyptian Sphinx was always represented as a male and without wings, the Grecian as a female and winged, the Chimera as a monster neither animal nor human, having no prototype, in whole or in part, among living creatures; while the bull of Assyria, selected to sentinel the country, combined the attributes of the protector in bodily strength, a head of wisdom and winged omnipresence.

A profusion of golden paneling and gilded or silvered surfaces, is found in all the discovered palaces. "I have ascertained," says Texier, "that there is not a corner of the palace (Persepolis) in which there is not the most delicate and careful painting; it was the same at Khorsabad, at Nimroud, and also at Ecbatana, the capital of Media, where, according to Polybius, in his description of the palace of the Kings of Persia, the porticoes, the peristyles and the walls were covered with plates of gold and silver, which were pillaged by the soldiers of Alexander." This gilding was laid on a base of enameled bricks, overlapping each other so as to form the saw-tooth ornament shown beneath the winged bull in Fig. 4, of the plate.

Zobeide, in the account of

her wanderings related in that veracious volume, "The Arabian Nights," tells of visiting the palace of the petrified queen, and explains that she "discovered a gate, covered with plates of gold, the two folding doors of which were open; a silk curtain seemed drawn before it, and a lamp was suspended inside of the gate." Authorities much more authentic than this one is credited with being, tell of the elaborate hangings indulged in by the early peoples of the East, and the rich stuffs used by them for this purpose. We can refer to the unparalleled elegance of the Oriental *portieres* of to-day to sustain the reputation of their ancestors, and no more graceful mode of hanging decoration can be imagined than that shown in the fringed border of Fig. 4, and given with greater detail in the smaller figure above. It forms the termination of the frieze in Fig. 4, of our plate, and is suspended upon a bar extending around the room; the material used was stuffs, or probably in rare instances silk, and it is a suggestion not unworthy of imitation.

It was not unusual for alabaster slabs to be set in the walls, held together by clamps either of iron, copper or wood. Above the alabaster slabs, plastered decorations were used; in some cases painted frescos have been found, or mosaics formed with enameled bricks of various colors.

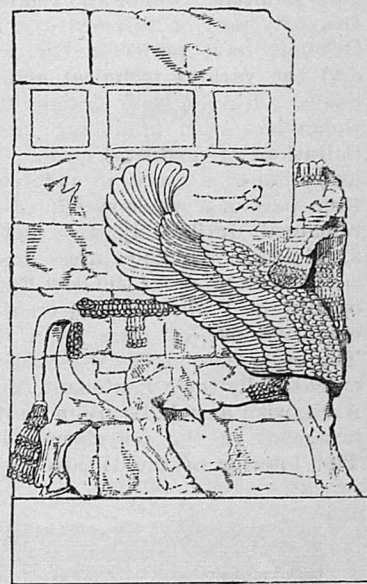
The design shown in the upper left-hand corner of Fig. 3 of our plate, is given above and taken from the ruins at Khoyunjik, in which have been found some of the most beautiful and finished examples of Assyrian art. In its border may be traced the influence of the lotus ornament of Egypt, and possibly a distant resemblance to the later honeysuckle of the Greeks.

There is one ornament to which the people attached a superstitious regard, probably the only one, but it is used so generally that it would not be doing justice to the subject to neglect to revert to it, even though it does not properly belong to a description of our colored plate.

A peculiarly formed bush was known as the Sacred Bush, and looked upon with peculiar veneration; it is reasonable to think that it has some affinity with the idea of the Tree of Life, and probably the early people so regarded it.

Not the least noticeable among their lighter innovations was the imitation of a canopy stretched between the spectator and the sky, and bearing the decoration of the ceiling. This is shown

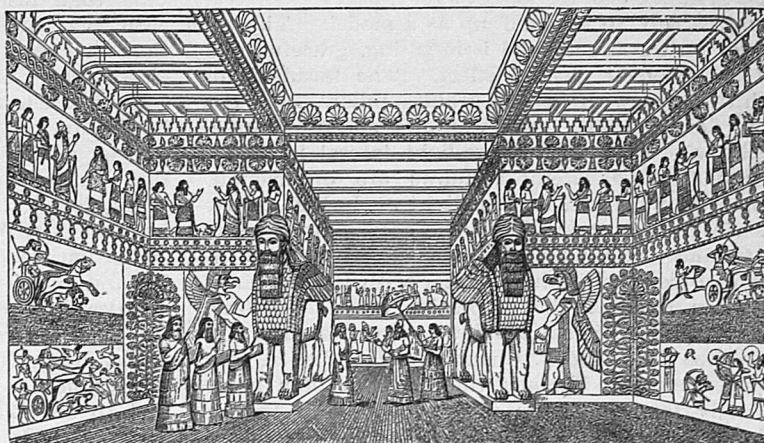
in the lower right-hand corner of Fig. 3 of our plate. Assyrian art has left but little influence upon the art of to-day, very few of its peculiarities survive, and these are not received with a marked favor. Its mission was rather to be a link between the nomadic and the monumental phases of art.



ASSYRIAN BULL.



THE SACRED BUSH.



INTERIOR OF AN ASSYRIAN TEMPLE (RESTORED).